

## Government Analyzed

*The State.* By Franz Oppenheimer. Translated by John M. Gitterman. Second American edition. B. W. Huebsch, Inc. \$2.

LIKE the light and the air, government is taken as matter-of-course. Sometimes this or that form or mode of government comes under popular scrutiny, and occasionally changes are effected by exercise of the popular will, as, e.g., from autocracy to constitutionalism, or from constitutional monarchy to republicanism; but government itself—that is to say, the state as an historical phenomenon—is seldom regarded in the light of a *corpus vile* for dissection and research. Mr. Oppenheimer has in this small volume carried on to a conclusion the work of the late Professor Gumpowicz of Graz, in considering the history and development of the state, from its earliest rudimentary appearances down through its various differentiations and integrations to its present highly organized form. He does not follow the a priori or speculative method which all English and American writers on the state have invariably followed, from Bentham and Locke to Carey and Woodrow Wilson. His method is purely historical and sociological (in the Continental use of the term, not in ours) and therein lies its greatest merit.

Though short, it is a hard book to read, requiring a high degree of concentration and some constructive imagination unless one be prepared for it, say, by acquaintance with the fundamental economics of the Physiocrats. But it is quite proper to say that at just this stage in the progress of public affairs, both in this country and in Western Europe, there is no book current which approaches it in practical value to a reader; for it enables him to answer for himself a number of questions which are just now pressing for answer, with uncommon definiteness and force.

For example, more than ever before, probably, people are wondering at the disparity between the moral code which the state enforces upon the individual and that which itself accepts. The state represses private murder; yet itself organizes murder on a colossal scale. It represses private robbery; yet it organizes robbery at wholesale upon weaker communities. It represses private theft; yet it organizes theft into a quite elaborate system in its own behalf and that of its beneficiaries, through tariffs and various forms of indirect taxation. It is a legitimate matter of wonder that, as Principal Jacks points out in the February issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the most important and conspicuous examples of anarchy are today furnished by the state, which, nevertheless, is rigorous to the point of silliness in repressing anarchistic tendencies in individuals. A thoughtful person must wonder, too, at the invariable disposition of the state to act against the general interests and in favor of the special interests, and at the enormous amount of pressure that must invariably be brought to bear upon the state before it will forgo this disposition—e. g., in the matter of so-called "welfare legislation."

There is no more valuable service, clearly, than to put a reader in the way of giving a competent answer to questions like these, and Mr. Oppenheimer's book does just that. By observing what the nature of the state is, what its origins were, and what has been the course of its development, the reader can perceive at once that the phenomena of the modern state which give rise to such questions are logical and to be expected. He becomes aware, furthermore, of the course which history indicates that he should follow, the tendencies in society with which he should cooperate, in order to effect the transformation of the state—or, strictly speaking, its disappearance.

It is an interesting testimony to the quality of academic freedom under "Prussian autocracy" that after publishing this book Mr. Oppenheimer held without trouble his place in the University of Berlin, and only left it when, during the war, he was called to a higher place as professor of political science in the University of Frankfurt.

ALBERT JAY NOCK

## Books in Brief

*The East Wind.* By Hugh MacNair Kahler. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.

Unusually well-written thesis stories from the *Saturday Evening Post*, embodying a conservative's *cave* against social, intellectual, and moral discontent.

*Peradventure.* By Robert Keable. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.

The irrepressible author of "Simon Called Peter" discovers religious doubt.

*Star of Earth.* By Morris Dallett. Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.50.

Short, colorful romance of South American revolution. For the admirers rather of Joseph Hergesheimer than of Richard Harding Davis.

*The Church on the Avenue.* By Helen Martin. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$2.

How a small-town minister comes into conflict with village magnates. Thoughtful in the working out, but rather bare as fiction.

*Rube.* By G. A. Borgese. Authorized translation by Isaac Goldberg. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.

Elaborate analysis of the neurotic intellectual in Italy before, during, and after the war.

*The Girl Next Door.* By Lee Wilson Dodd. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

An interesting character dragged into a preposterous and far too "whimsical" story.

*Picture Frames.* By Thyra Samter Winslow. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

Sophisticated stories about simple people. The milieu of O. Henry and the philosophy of the *Smart Set*.

*Falsifications of the Russian Orange Book.* Edited by Baron G. von Romberg. B. W. Huebsch. \$1.

At last this extraordinary revelation of Entente deceit appears in English. The full text of the correspondence between the Russian Foreign Office and the Russian Ambassador at Paris in July, 1914, compared with the text as published in 1914, reveals the deliberate deception of the world in 1914. The book was reviewed in *The Nation* last December.

*Comparative History, 1878-1914.* By the ex-Emperor of Germany. Translated by F. Appleby Holt. Robert M. McBride and Company. \$3.

A translation of the comparative historical tables reviewed in *The Nation* last October, which show the ex-Kaiser as earnest and as poor an historian as M. Poincaré himself. This edition is adorned with sixteen pictures of Wilhelm and his royal friends, and suffers by sacrifice of the tabular form of presentation.

## Drama Actresses

A LATE spring and many plays and a general sense of weariness and disillusion. Can this jaded place be the theater? The plays seem empty, the acting mere antics. All that is festive is gone. Do the very lights burn dim? The cleverest scenery turns to lathe, lanterns, canvas, tawdry and inchoate. You close your eyes and see a favorite hill, a remembered bend of shore-line. But disillusion has its deceptions too. If suddenly, on one of these evenings, the curtain were to rise on greatness, humanity, energy, resonance—we should all recover at once what now seems irrecoverable and find in some dusty playhouse mountains, shore, and sea.

Even Mr. Clayton Hamilton, I imagine, will stint the assurance of his praise at the latest play of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero. Pinero had, at his best, a certain adroitness and energy as a